

COMMENTARY

"LIMITED WAR" AS THE PATH TO PEACE

The Case for Containment

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THE dismissal of General MacArthur has brought the Western policy of "containment" into question in this country. MacArthur wanted to force an immediate military showdown with the Communists in Asia. By his resolute action against MacArthur, President Truman has made it clear that our purpose is not simply to win the war in Korea—it is primarily to avert World War III. We resisted aggression to discourage further aggression. But we do not want to take up a larger challenge

THE program of "containment," carefully worked out by American policy-makers since the end of World War II to check Communist expansion without precipitating general war, is under fierce attack from those who believe it is either too cautious or too belligerent. Both camps of critics agree that it must fail because it is insufficiently "dynamic": not (we hear from one side) attacking Communist power in the lands where it exists, or (the other joins in) strengthening, through social reform and economic revolution, the power to resist Communism in the lands it threatens. ROBERT LANGBAUM argues here that both groups of opponents—those who want a greater military effort and those who think a military effort is both useless and dangerous—fail to understand the real potential of "limited war" for remaking the world as well as checking Communism. Mr. Langbaum teaches in the English department at Cornell University. He was born in New York in 1924.

than has been openly laid down. We do not want to push the enemy further in the direction of hostility than he has specifically elected to go.

What it comes down to is whether our purpose is to destroy world Communism. President Truman has made it clear that that is *not* our purpose. Our purpose is to convince the Communists that they risk too much in trying to expand by force of arms. It is to make the West so strong and the United Nations so effective that the Communists will find it to their best advantage to maneuver as they can within the international legal framework. That is what is meant by "containment."

It is understandable that such a policy should be criticized as inadequate by those forces on the right whose main interest is to launch a holy war against Communism, at once and everywhere. What is surprising, however, is that "containment" has been just as vigorously opposed by certain American liberals who—unwilling to relinquish the political signposts of the 30's—are afraid that our military and diplomatic chiefs are using the policy to ease us into a war designed to further American imperialistic interests and to crush progressive political movements at home and abroad. To be sure, these liberals know that they must, in the moment of decision, stand against Russia.

But they have not been able quite to dispel their suspicion of a road to peace that looks so opposite from what the pacifist congresses used to recommend—a road lined on both sides with guns.

ACTUALLY, the liberal attack against "containment" has been led not by Americans but by certain French and British intellectuals who have advocated a policy of "neutralism" for Western Europe. These "neutralists" are against Communism but they are by no means for capitalism—and since they consider that the present struggle is between Russian Communism and American capitalism, they do not believe that Western Europe has any interest in it except to organize itself into a "third force" and stand as a buffer between the two combatants. This "neutralist" criticism has hit home among American liberals, who are not themselves ready to go to the wall to preserve capitalism. And yet, not being able quite so neatly to dissociate themselves from their own country's struggle, they have spoken with less assurance than their French and British counterparts. Their main role has been to transmit the "neutralist" criticism, though with some misgivings.

The "neutralist" point of view is adequately represented by an article of Jean-Paul Sartre's, "The Chances of Peace," published in the *Nation* some months ago. In its setting, the article illustrates the relation between American liberals and European "neutralists" in that it is specifically addressed to the readers of the best-known American liberal journal and states what amounts to the editorial policy of that journal—but with less equivocation. Sartre makes his "neutralist" position clear by telling us that "Western Europe can serve as a buffer zone between America and Russia only if it belongs to neither," and by advising us that the moment we cease to regard the French as "soldiers" we will rediscover them as "friends."

But more to our purpose is the fact that Sartre would have America, too, take a more neutral attitude toward Russian aggressive-

ness. His argument for this is self-contradictory. On the one hand, he thinks it is useless for America to attempt to rearm Western Europe because Western Europe cannot within the practicable future be made strong enough to resist Russian attack—and why therefore irritate the Russians? It is also useless because the common people are not for us: with the exception of Britain, the European democracies are divided internally "in two camps, ready, in the event of war, to tear themselves to pieces."

Having frightened us with this gloomy picture, Sartre tries, on the other hand, to assure us that there is nothing to be frightened about. After all, "two interpretations of Soviet policy have always been made in official American circles"—so why not take the more optimistic one, which is that Russia's intentions are not warlike? Besides, war is not inevitable because the Russians "are not inevitably driven to this imperialism by their economy."

The picture is at once too pessimistic and too optimistic. There is no use arming because the Russians are too strong; there is no reason to arm because the Russians wouldn't hurt a fly. This kind of self-contradictory argument appeals to that lazy part of all of us which would like to clutch at any and all justifications for the avoidance of decisive action. But it makes its particular appeal by means of certain false assumptions which linger particularly in the liberal consciousness and need clearing up.

THIS war towards which we are heading," says Sartre, "presents a very different aspect from other wars. Ordinarily a conflict of interests is disguised as an ideological dispute. This time opposed ideologies will be disguised as conflicting interests."

Granting Sartre's assertion that the present hostility is ideological rather than economic, it seems to me that he has wrongly defined the ideological question at stake. To begin with, one is surprised to find that Sartre considers the present hostility unique because ideological. One had supposed that the war against Nazism was also ideological.

But then it becomes apparent that Sartre, when he says "ideological," is thinking of it from the Communist viewpoint. He does not mean that the present conflict is between Eastern ideals and Western ideals. He means that the Russians are the ideologues, disinterestedly if ruthlessly translating high principles into reality, while we are the *ancien régime*, doing our best to maintain our wealth and privileges against the oncoming wave of the future. "The choice between you and the Russians," he tells us, "is one between cynics and madmen." They are the madmen, overzealous for an ideal; we are the cynics, willing to employ any recourse to protect our possessions. Thus, as Sartre sees it, World War II was—except for Russia—a mere conflict of rival capitalisms, but the present conflict is ideological in that the decadent capitalist status quo is being challenged by revolutionary Communism.

Sartre does not explicitly say this, but the assumption informs every line of his article. It explains why he is so sure that the common people of Europe and Asia will not be with us in event of war. It explains why he cannot conceive that our side might be supported for other than selfish, materialistic reasons—that it might seem, on rational reflection, the just side. Our supporters abroad are "oppressive minorities" who depend upon us to protect them against the "exploited and oppressed." The French "know both arguments," ours and the Russians', and Sartre gives us no reason to suppose that our argument comes out on top. The American public itself has acquired a war mentality, not as a natural response to Russian aggressiveness, but because it has been deliberately "blinded and exacerbated"—presumably by capitalist propaganda.

IT is doubtless to the advantage of the Russians to have us think that the West is fighting to preserve capitalism. And the staunch pro-capitalists among us probably do think so. But the preservation of capitalism is not the common interest that binds

together the diverse nations outside the Soviet bloc. Britain has officially repudiated capitalism. New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries can hardly be called capitalist. The socialist parties of the Continent stand with the conservative parties against the Communists because they know that capitalism is not the question at the present time. Any of our allies might nationalize its land and industry tomorrow without disturbing the alliance—provided the nationalization were not carried out by the party that takes orders from Moscow. For it is not capitalism but fear of Russia that binds together the diverse nations—whether capitalist, socialist, or feudal-agrarian—outside the Soviet bloc. Their common desire is for security. Their common interest is to support a principle of international order and, in the long run, a world sovereignty which would guarantee to nations the same protection that national sovereignties now guarantee to individuals.

That is the ideological question at stake in the present hostilities. Seen from this perspective, we are the ideologues and the real revolution of our time is taking place through the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Marshall Plan, the Benelux Customs Union, the Schuman Plan, and the American and British Commonwealth plans for the development of backward areas. Most of all, if it works out successfully, the United Nations action in Korea will prove the first decisive accomplishment of the revolution—in that a real functioning world government will have emerged from it. For a government, after all, is a concentration of power in support of a principle of order: the rest is embellishment.

I would not maintain that the motives among us are always as justifiable as our cause. We do what we can to make men better, but we do not inquire into a man's motives before we give him police protection or take his taxes. It is precisely the miracle of a social order that it can direct the energies of its members toward an interest higher than the interest each conceives for himself in supporting that order.

It is true enough that we have, as Sartre complains, attracted to our side "Greek monarchists, Chiang Kai-shek's corrupt minions, Franco's Falange." But we used to have on our side, when the struggle was against such rightist elements as these—the Communists. And we now have Tito on our side for the same reason that we have the rightists. The reason is that our side is now, as it was in the last war, the *social* side, the side of the elements, good or bad, who for good or bad reasons want at any particular time to keep the peace. The issue is not capitalism, it is not at this stage even democracy. It is not a question of the private lives of nations but only that they do not point guns at other nations.

Roosevelt made this minimum requirement clear in his settlement with Russia at the end of the war. According to that settlement, America and Russia were to co-exist, not because they would agree in political and economic practice, but because they would agree in supporting a principle of international order. Roosevelt's idea at Yalta seems to have been to make the concessions necessary to give Russia a substantial share in the status quo and thus make it advantageous for her to keep the peace. The question we now face is: does Russia think she can gain greater advantage through war than through peace, or has she determined to sacrifice immediate material advantage to promote Communist revolution?

IT is surprising enough to learn from Sartre that the present hostilities are unique because they are, in contrast to World War II, ideological. But it is even more surprising to learn that we are expected to draw comfort from the fact that they are ideological. We can perhaps agree with Sartre that the Russians "are not inevitably driven to this imperialism by their economy." But we must surely hope that they are motivated by some kind of "self-interest"—if Western policy is to stand any chance of succeeding in its primary purpose: to avert World War III.

Suppose the contrary to be true—that the

Russian motivation is entirely ideological. Suppose they are prepared to sacrifice immediate material advantage to promote at any price the world Communist revolution. What comfort can we draw from that? What chance does that leave for a settlement? What could we offer short of total surrender to satisfy them? Any concessions on our part would be interpreted as a sign of the weakness of the existing order and as an invitation to take further steps toward the liquidation of that order.

And suppose war does come. Sartre's prospect of an ideological war is certainly as terrifying, indeed more terrifying, than the prospect of an old-fashioned imperialistic war. The bloodiest wars of the past have been those in which, Sartre notwithstanding, the majority of the participants at least thought they were fighting over principles—religious wars, revolutions, wars of national independence. Of all pre-modern wars, the religious wars of the Reformation, culminating in the terrible Thirty Years' War, most nearly rivaled in destructiveness the wars of the 20th century.

Indeed, it was as a reaction against the excesses of the religious wars of the Reformation that the succeeding age, the Enlightenment, turned against theology and religious zeal. Having seen survival threatened by the clash of irreconcilable principles, the men of the Enlightenment made survival the primary consideration and compromise the rule for international relations. Their own wars were fought quite plainly for the sake of trade and territory, and it is interesting to note with what relative moderation these economic or imperialistic wars were fought. Most of them were fought only long enough to determine which side was stronger and then quickly ended with a compromise, with the transfer of a city or a province, with the readjustment of a boundary. We smile nowadays at the "gentlemanly" wars of the 18th century. But they were hardheaded wars of national self-interest, and the combatants reasoned, just as hardheadedly, that there was no point in losing Rome to gain Gaul—no point in

bankrupting themselves to get rich, certainly no point in risking survival.

One has only to compare the economic wars of the 18th century with the Thirty Years' War and with the last-ditch wars of the 20th century (in which nationalism and ideology have taken the place of religion) to see that the ideological potential of the present hostilities is precisely the danger. The danger to survival has become so great in modern warfare that one wonders whether the desire for economic or territorial expansion can ever again be a sufficient cause for war. For it is not, after all, the standard of living, but only the conviction that it is better to be destroyed than forced to give up a particular way of life, that could impel a nation to risk the annihilation of itself and the rest of the world. That or an insane nihilism—a possibility which we dare not, since Hitler, entirely overlook.

An ideological struggle always involves, of course, a question of the most fundamental self-interest—cultural survival. Both East and West will fight in a showdown, and both will justify such a war as a war for survival. At the same time they will be aware how little chance they stand of surviving the war for survival. They will identify the ideological question with a question of the most fundamental self-interest; but in fighting for the ideology, they will sacrifice the self-interest. That is the predicament we face as of 1951. Sartre suggests one way out—for the West to back down: to pull out of Korea, to make no attempt at rearmament, to do nothing, in short, to irritate the Russians. He does not conceive such a course as betrayal since we have (remember!) no ideology other than the purely negative one of stemming the tide of Communist ideology. He is, however, inconsistent in that he does not fully face up to the implications of his position. He talks as though we could pursue the course he advocates and still retain the power and prosperity which he considers to be the only things we care about anyway.

Two British "neutralists," Herbert Read and Alex Comfort, are more consistent. In

a joint letter to the British Labor weekly, the *New Statesman and Nation*, February 10, they go further than Sartre—they advocate the immediate and total disarmament of Britain. But they also announce their readiness to stand by the consequences. Rather than risk annihilation in atomic warfare, they are ready to accede to any and all Russian demands, even if it means surrendering national independence. Set forth this way, the "neutralist" position is logically unassailable since it would, if adopted, undoubtedly eliminate the danger of war.

It is assailable, however, on empiric grounds—the inescapable fact being that few of us are entirely free of reservations as to how far we would be willing to give in. This being so, our temporary complaisance would encourage the Russians to approach the limit of our endurance and we would be weakening ourselves for the eventual resistance. Are we thus thrown back upon the other disastrous alternative posed by the "neutralists"—to prepare for all-out war?

FORTUNATELY, there is the conceivable third way out which Western policy, by a kind of inevitable avoidance of greater evils, in fact adopted. As early as five years ago, Aldous Huxley was able to predict the present condition of "limited warfare," on the basis of historical analogy. In a brilliant passage of the foreword to a new edition of *Brave New World*, Huxley develops the analogy I have already touched upon, between the war-ridden first half of the 20th century and the war-ridden age of the Reformation. He suggests that the lesson of Hiroshima may cause us to react against the period 1914-45 in the same way in which the men of the Enlightenment reacted against the Thirty Years' War:

"The unimaginable horrors of the Thirty Years' War," Huxley writes, "actually taught men a lesson, and for more than a hundred years the politicians and generals of Europe consciously resisted the temptation to use their military resources to the limits of destructiveness or (in the majority of conflicts) to go on fighting until the enemy was

totally annihilated. They were aggressors, of course, greedy for profit and glory; but they were also conservatives, determined at all costs to keep their world intact, as a going concern. In the last thirty years there have been no conservatives; there have been only nationalistic radicals of the right and nationalistic radicals of the left. The last conservative statesman was the Fifth Marquess of Lansdowne; and when he wrote a letter to the *Times*, suggesting that the First World War should be concluded with a compromise, as most of the wars of the eighteenth century had been, the editor of that once conservative journal refused to print it. The nationalistic radicals had their way, with the consequences that we all know—Bolshevism, Fascism, inflation, depression, Hitler, the Second World War, the ruin of Europe and all but universal famine."

Huxley's analysis of our mistake in World War I is interesting because we were told during the last war that our mistake in 1918 had been precisely that we did compromise—that we ought never to have consented to an armistice until we had carried the fight into Germany and had occupied Berlin. We made it a point not to commit the same "mistake" in 1945. And having learned a lesson from the events that led up to the last war we are now making it a point not to compromise with—not to "appease," we call it—the forces of aggression. But Huxley would have us learn another lesson. He would have us learn "from Hiroshima as much as our forefathers learned from Magdeburg"—that the primary consideration is survival, to keep our world "intact as a going concern."

IT is a lesson most of us are only too anxious to learn—at least on this side of the Iron Curtain. The question is about the other side. There is every reason to believe that Chamberlain was being in Huxley's sense "conservative" when he went to Munich. He was willing to make whatever adjustments of the status quo might be necessary to preserve it. He failed in the

end, but few people would maintain that it was because he didn't grant Hitler enough. He failed because Hitler could not for any price be induced to share the "conservative" interest in a "going concern."

Nor was Roosevelt a "nationalistic radical" at Yalta. He was being "conservative"—willing to overlook ideological differences for the sake of mutual survival. It is still too early to know whether he has finally failed—whether the Russians will not for any price be induced to share our interest in a "going concern." Meanwhile Sartre, Read, Comfort, *et al.*, would probably maintain that they are carrying on Roosevelt's work in advocating that we do nothing to raise bars against a community with the Russians. They would be wrong, however, to the extent that they are less "realistic" than Roosevelt. Roosevelt did not assume that the West would be willing to acquiesce indefinitely. The positive side of Roosevelt's policy, the side he pursued at Yalta, was to make it advantageous for the Russians not to fight by giving them a substantial share in the status quo. The negative—and equally indispensable—side of his policy, the side we are now being forced to pursue, is to make it advantageous for the Russians not to fight by doing everything we can to boost the cost to them of war.

In the same way, Huxley does not expect that the lesson of Hiroshima is going to eliminate conflict from the world. The best he hopes for, if we are so wise as to have learned a lesson, is a "period, not indeed of peace, but of limited and only partially ruinous warfare." He envisions the kind of situation we now have in Korea: in which each side does the best for itself that it can, even resorting to arms—but always within the limits of an unwritten agreement that mutual annihilation is not to be risked and that mutual survival is to remain at all costs the primary consideration.

THE anomalous policy of the United Nations in regard to Korea indicates that our side, at least, is operating within such limits. When it was only a question of the

North Koreans, the United Nations supported all measures necessary to bring the fighting to a speedy conclusion. But as soon as the Chinese became participants, as soon as the danger arose of an extension of the conflict, we began to hear the phrase "limited warfare." Only after much hesitation did the United Nations decide to resist the Chinese aggression, and then with the clear provision that we would not carry resistance to its logical conclusion—all-out war against China.

Before the Chinese participation, the United Nations forces crossed the 38th Parallel with the purpose of taking all North Korea. But when United Nations forces approached the Parallel again, after having retreated before the Chinese offensive, General Ridgway assured them that it would be a "tremendous victory for the United Nations" if the war ended with our forces in control up to the Parallel. And it is now understood that United Nations forces are to cross the Parallel only far enough to keep the enemy off balance and insure the safety of our troops. MacArthur opposed this policy and his dismissal reaffirms it in unmistakable terms.

How about the Chinese (and Russians)—are they too conducting a "limited war" in Korea? It is difficult to say. Walter Lippmann suggested some time ago that there exists a tacit agreement by which we grant the Chinese sanctuary behind the Yalu and in return the Chinese (and Russians) do not contest our control of the air in Korea. The idea sounded fantastic at the time. But it seems borne out by the Chinese offensive this spring which was conducted with a notable lack of air support, even though we had heard before it began of an air build-up in Manchuria. We have since announced—again bearing out Lippmann—our intention of bombing Manchurian airfields if the Chinese show air strength in Korea. This leaves it squarely up to the Communists to decide how "limited" the war is to be.

It is difficult to know what to make of the Chinese tactic of melting away after

their first appearance in Korea last fall, and again this winter after their offensive had threatened to drive us off the peninsula. These withdrawals may have been dictated entirely by military necessity. But it is not, I think, extravagant to suggest that the Chinese might find it dangerous to defeat us too drastically since we would then be forced to bring our full power to bear against them. And it might, in the same way, be dangerous for us to defeat the Chinese so drastically as to threaten the security of the Peiping regime, for then Russia might find it necessary to intervene. Some kind of stalemate would seem to be, at present, the best that both sides can hope for. Certainly General Marshall, in his recent Senate testimony, held out no better hope. With a stalemate, the United Nations would be able to show that while it does not mean to threaten the Communist homelands, the Communists cannot get away with aggression. And the Communists would be able to pull out of a mistaken venture with a minimum loss of face. Should the stalemate extend beyond Korea to become a general *modus vivendi* with Communism in the Far East, so much the better.

SUCH a stalemate would prove that the original diplomatic division of Korea is practically justifiable in terms of power. It would prove that, all things considered, neither side has the will or power to push the other out of Korea—that Korea represents a limit of power of the Communist and non-Communist worlds and therefore a "natural" boundary between them.

One can conceive how, in the immediate future, similar tests might be applied against other weak spots along the line between the two worlds—in which case the United Nations would have to rush reinforcements to whatever spot showed need of plugging up. But if the immediate future follows what seems to be shaping up as the pattern of the present, this apparent chaos would be governed by a strict though unwritten code. First, it would be understood that the test could not be applied in crucial areas.

Russia might conceivably play the Korean game again in Indo-China, Malaya, Finland; less conceivably, in Iran or Yugoslavia. But she will not play it in Germany or Japan, unless she has already made up her mind for another world war.

Second, it would be understood that each conflict was to be treated separately and localized. As I have said earlier, neither side would take up a larger challenge than had been specifically laid down. Neither would push the other further in the direction of hostility than it had specifically elected to go. What power would enforce such a code? The new devil-deity, the perpetual overhanging threat of the Bomb.

IT is a sad comment on our time that an uneasy deadlock, a future of "limited warfare," should be the best we can hope for. Yet most Americans—and perhaps most Russians too—prefer it to total war or total surrender. I see no fourth more cheerful possibility unless we suppose a miraculous change of heart on one or both sides—a consummation we all wish for devoutly provided the change does not take place on our side.

How long can such an uneasy deadlock endure and what will it lead to? Each side can hope that its own prosperity, coupled with the other's decline, will gain for it a bloodless victory. Or time, by introducing new problems, may render obsolete the problems that now beset us. In fifty years there will no longer be the same Russia and America as today. The "givens" will have changed and with them, for better or worse, the alignments and problems. Meanwhile, our job would necessarily be to weather the immediate future, to play for time.

The job is essentially one of conservation—to keep our world "intact as a going concern" by defending it, on the one hand, against attack from without and, on the other hand, by not committing it to a struggle which, win or lose, it could not possibly survive. For all we know, the Russians may be conceiving the same job for themselves as regards the Communist

world. It is a job which requires the utmost suppleness. And since suppleness has never been a strong point of democratic policy, the job is going to be more difficult in the 20th century than it was in the monarchical 18th, and more difficult for us than for the Russians.

Public opinion is slow to form and slow to change, and can create a dangerous momentum carrying us further in a given direction than we ought to go and beyond the point where we ought to have changed to another direction. The MacArthur opposition is currently riding that momentum. The General has logic on his side when he tells the American public that in war there is no substitute for victory. There is a simple and satisfying consistency in the conclusion that the same principle that led us to undertake the Korean war ought to lead us to do everything possible to win it. Read and Comfort are also, for that matter, logical when they advocate unilateral disarmament to prevent war. The trouble with both extremes is that they do not take enough facts into consideration.

Read and Comfort do not consider that most people are simply not ready to give in indefinitely. MacArthur does not consider the world context of the Korean war—that doing everything possible to win the Korean war may diminish our chance of winning the crucial war, if it comes to war: and that it means in any case the almost certain failure of our primary purpose, to avert a general war. The MacArthur controversy shows very clearly at least one danger of "containment"—that popular pressure may force the government to take up a larger challenge than has been specifically laid down. If we are to succeed in our primary purpose, the public is going to have to learn to seek not a simple consistency of principle, but the consistency of principle with *fact* and *purpose*. Pragmatic liberalism, with its suspicion of principle and its respect for fact and purpose, with its respect above all for the strenuous and unabating use of mind, is eminently suited to undertake this formidable job of education.

LIBERALS are also suited to counteract another danger of "containment," coming this time from the professional diplomats. I mean the danger that "containment" will turn into ossification, that diplomats will take the easiest way to keep our world "intact"—by blocking social change at home and abroad. This danger has particularly worried liberals, many of whom oppose "containment" because of it. Those liberals are wrong, however, who assume that "containment" must necessarily be a policy obstructive of change.

There is no reason why we cannot preserve our world at the roots without inhibiting or constricting its growth. If we meet the threat of Communist aggression by banding together to uphold international law and order, if we break down national barriers and try to cure economic and social ills—what does that do but insure growth? The name "containment" is perhaps unfortunate because it suggests that we are marking time. But the things we are doing to preserve our collective life (the Marshall Plan, the Schuman Plan, the Council of Europe, aid to backward areas, the strengthening of the UN Assembly) have already wrought important changes. They constitute the real revolution of our age.

Huxley, in the foreword I have cited, predicts that the period of "limited warfare" will bring cultural decline and universal totalitarianism. The danger is real but liberals cannot accept doom as inevitable. At the same time that they defend "containment" against those who think war inevitable, they must keep up a constant criticism of the policy itself, pointing out faults in its execution. This criticism is already under way and will probably form the main subject for public discussion in the immediate future.

One writer warns that the Communists are riding into power in still feudal countries, not on a collectivist platform, but on a platform rightfully belonging to us—agrarian reform, catering to the peasants'

desire to own the land they work on. Another warns against sacrificing, in the name of the emergency, university education and other so-called "luxuries" of a high civilization, lest we lose our civilization in the process of trying to save it. Almost any issue of any liberal journal includes these days at least one article warning against the use of anti-Communist hysteria to prevent the bold functioning of democracy. Liberals must carry this criticism of the execution of the policy of "containment" into the arena of practical politics where it can become effective.

Disaster threatens whichever way we turn—war, surrender, cultural decline. A false step even in the best direction could ruin us. That is why it is dangerous to use nationalistic or ideological catchwords to enlist public support for the fight against aggression; it is dangerous to stir up irrational impulses. For, in a democracy, such impulses can create a blind force, a momentum beyond control; and we need, above all, control at every step. We are fighting to establish the primacy of law in international affairs, and we must be able to proceed with the same dogged patience, the same dispassionate fairmindedness for which the British and American courts of law are so justly famous. If we could proceed against aggressors not because they had offended us as Americans but because they had offended the law of nations, we would be acting in the proper spirit and establishing precedents constructive of a world society. We would also be so secure of the disinterestedness of our motives that we would be able to make the pragmatic adjustment of principle to fact and purpose without breaking down in disillusionment as did the generation of World War I.

We need, as never before in history, sheer mind and sober responsibility on the part of everyone. We need the qualities of mind and heart which liberalism, when it lives up to its own best tradition, has it in its power to give.